





"I beg your pardon, Can I help you?"

The Doctor jerked his head in the direction of the authoritative voice. "Oh Hallo," he said cheerily. "Perhaps you can. I seem to have taken a wrong turn. I don't suppose you can tell me where I am, can you?"

"Where you are is less important than how you

got here."

The Doctor cast an eye over his new acquaintance before answering. He was a tall man, wearing a black evening suit. His dark eyes sparkled dangerously. The Doctor could tell that he wasn't pleased. "Actually, the TARDIS just sort of brought me here."

"TARDIS? You're a Gallifreyan?"

"Why, yes. Do you know Gallifrey? Haven't been there in an age, myself. It's nice at this time of year. Not too many tourists. Are you a tourist?"

"No."

"Oh, too bad. Travel broadens the mind, you know." The Doctor started to take in his surroundings. The high roof of the room arched a dizzying hundred or so feet above him. There were control panels and computer banks everywhere. Here and there, metal robots busied themselves with some complex task or other. Printouts covered in calculations littered the place. "Ah . . . what line of business are you in Mr . . ."

"You may call me 'The Librarian'." replied the Doctor's host. "The work we do here is of para-

mount importance."

"Indeed?" The Doctor sounded more impressed than he was. He began to scan one of the numeral encrusted printouts. "Still using paper, eh? You ought to put in a requisition for more modern equipment."

"We manage," said the Librarian, testily. "Now, will you please leave those papers alone and leave

this place the same way you arrived?"

"Oh dear," said the Doctor, frowning. "That's no way to treat a traveller who's stopped to ask for directions . . . h'mm, interesing. Those equations are rather complicated. Very similar to mathematical block transfer. Ever been to Logopolis?"

"What do you know about Logopolis?" deman-

ded the Librarian sharply.

"Let's just say I know existential mathematics when I see them. What is it you do here?"

The Librarian looked for a moment like he may have been contemplating violence. He turned over the idea of having the Doctor physically ejected by one of the calculator droids, but it didn't appeal to his sense of subtlety. Besides, a struggle might upset the delicate instruments. But he would have to do something about this clearly deranged time traveller. The Librarian rummaged around in his repository of facial expressions and selected a disarming smile. Humour him. It was the best way.

"This," began the Librarian carefully, "is a kind

of library . . . "

"A library, eh? I don't suppose you have a copy of Commander Conquest and the Menace of the Fractured Airlock by Ivan Asimoff . . ."

"A kind of library. But we don't keep books here.

We store Events."

"Events. I don't think I follow you," said the Doctor wearing a puzzled frown.

The Librarian was warming to his subject now. It had been a long time since anyone had visited the Library. "Imagine, if you will, er . . ."

"Just 'Doctor' will do nicely!"

"Imagine, if you will, Doctor, that every occurence in the Universe is the direct result of a series of
events. Component events. Every event exists,
waiting, ready to be used in conjunction with other
events, to precipitate an occurence. We, here at the
Events Library, stand ready to supply each batch of
events as they are needed to allow the history of
the universe to develop according to the preprogrammed plan."

"Wait a minute," cut in the Doctor. "Are you telling me that you and your mechanical friends here orchestrate a pre-destined plan for the universe, according to some bureaucratic timetable?"

"Well, Doctor - " the Librarian smiled as a teacher to a pupil " - that is something of an over-simplification. What we do here . . ."

"What you do here is manipulate events, all events, affecting the lives of billions of intelligent beings throughout the Galaxies. Is that what you're claiming? Every birth, every death. Every decision is controlled from here?"

"Not everything. Just events in this sector. We have other branches, here and there."

"You make it sound like a chain of supermarkets."

"Actually, you're nearer to the truth than you imagine. Anything you could require, in the way of information, our files can supply. For example..." the Librarian turns to a control panel and stabbed a keyboard a few times, "... if I ask the computer to







give me a readout on the being called 'The Doctor', native planet Gallifrey, we should get a readout of your life so far. At the touch of a button, I can get a computer projection for the remainder of your life-span." The Librarian paused, then added darkly, "If you have one!"

The Librarian's expert eye scanned the jumble of symbols that appeared on the small, television-style screen. His eyebrows arched quizzically as he read. "My, my," he said after a few minutes, "you have been a busy fell ow in your life, haven't you?"

"I think I can say I've done my bit against injustice," said the Doctor quietly.

The Librarian was still reading the strange symbols of the viewscreen. Then, abruptly, he turned

from the screen to face the Doctor. "Done your bit? It would be more accurate to say you've made a full time career out of interfering in things that don't concern you."

It's true that I have interfered where life and liberty were at stake. How could any rational being do otherwise?"

"And you feel that your interference helps make the Universe a better place? Well, let's put that claim to the test. I'll pick one of your exploits, your adventures, at random. Let's see if your pious attitude stands up to the harsh light of scrutiny." The Librarian tinkered with the keyboard again. Within a few seconds an image had started to form on the screen . . .













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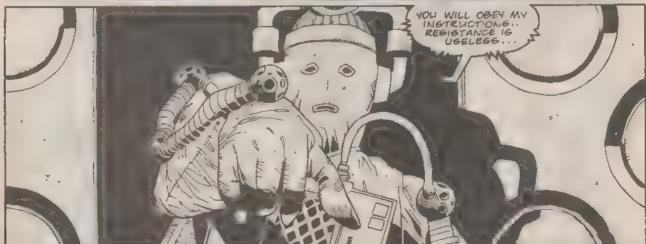




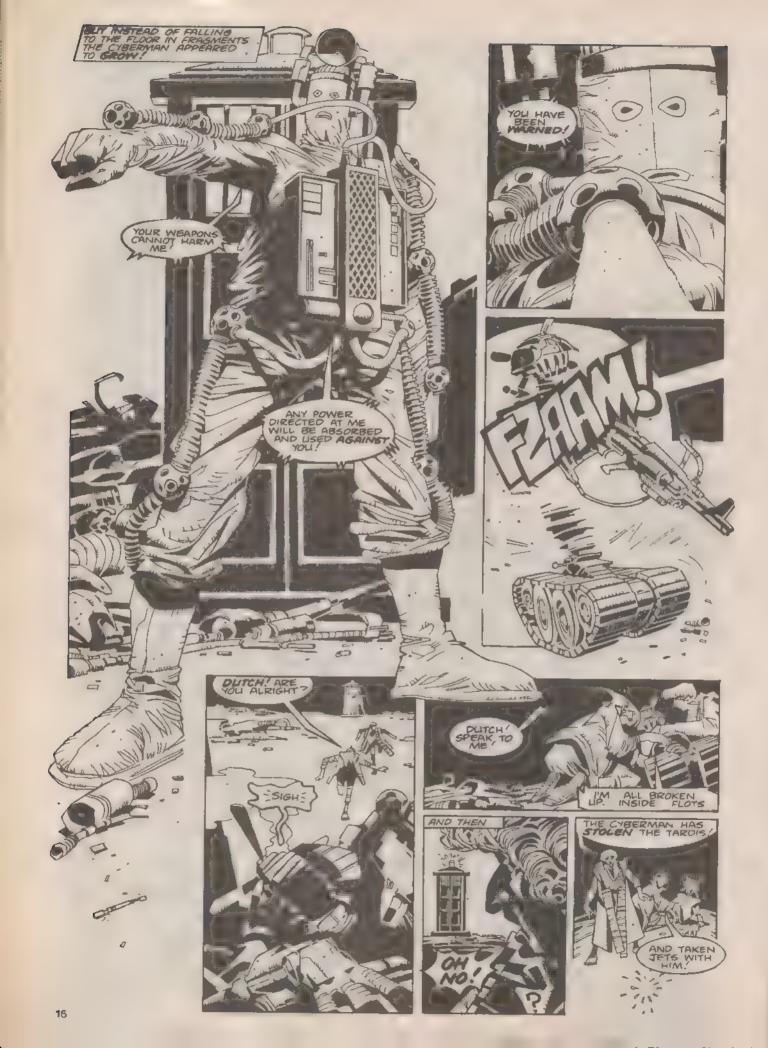








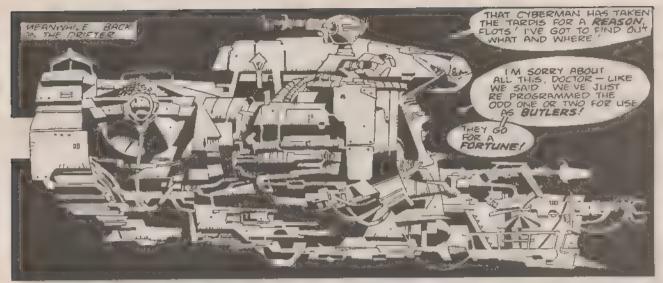








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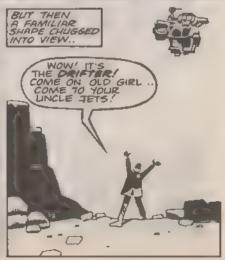






















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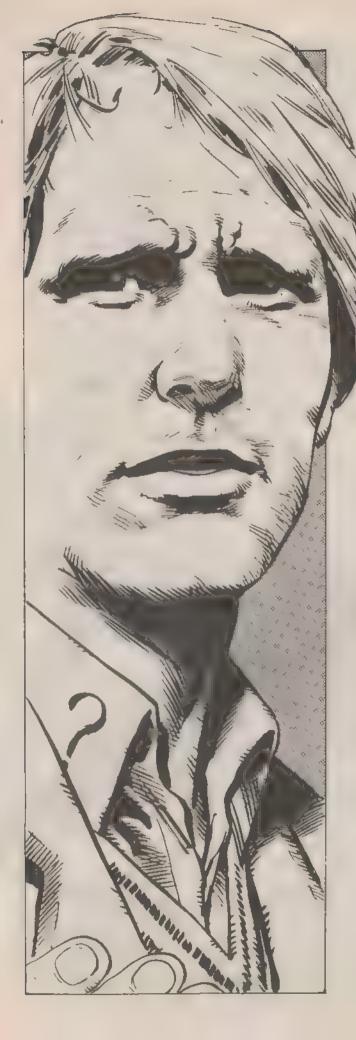
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The Events Librarian turned from the viewscreen as the last image faded from sight. The Doctor cleared his throat noisily and looked about him as though pre-occupied with some vast mental problem. Finally, the Librarian spoke.

"It seems to me, Doctor, that you cause more

trouble than you cure."

"That's unfair," exploded the Doctor. "And, anyway, who are you to pass judgement on my actions? You're nothing more than a paper shuffler. We Time Lords have a moral duty to those races less fortunate or less advanced than our own."

"Do you speak for all Gallifreyans? Or are you

merely justifying your own adventuring?"

"I'm not justifying anything," said the Doctor, controlling his irritation. "True, there are those Time Lords who feel that we should stay on Gallifrey and keep out of the affairs of other races. But I feel we have a moral duty to help wherever we can. There's ample precedent for what you call my interference throughout the history of the known universe. Many great beings have put their own safety second when it comes to helping others."

"And you count yourself among the great beings

of the Universe?"

"Now you're being petty. All I believe is that we all have a duty to give what we can to those less fortunate than ourselves. All the great religions are based on that very ideal. Yet you and your helpers

organise the catastrophes of infinity."

"But we give the entire space/time continuum Order. Everything is controlled, balanced. Dogooders upset the delicate scales of existence. And in the long run, achieve little." The Events Librarian glanced at the view screen, reading the symbols with a practiced eye. "You seem to have spent much of your time fighting a race called the Daleks. Yet, what have you accomplished there? Why, it says here that there was even a time when you held the absolute power of life and death over these beings. And what happened? For all your moralising about the prevention of injustice, you let these patently evil creatures live."

The Doctor thrust his hands deep into his pockets and examined the floor carefully. When he looked up again he said, "No one has the right to take life...

except, perhaps, in self defence."

"You see, Doctor? Things aren't quite as black and white as they first appear, are they? It is a rule of the Universe that every action, however slight or apparently inconsequential, sets up a series of ripples that expand ever outwards, touching and affecting everything that happens to lie in their path.

All too often, it is impossible to judge just how any action will affect the whole. Impossible for you, that is. And this is where my helpers and I come in. It is our job to keep a close check on events and ensure that things don't get out of hand." The Librarian touched a switch on one of the nearby panels and suddenly they were standing in the void of space. Around them a battle raged. Sleek battle cruisers and tiny fighters swooped and dived, delivering their messages of destruction. Despite the vacuum of this pseudo-space, the Doctor could hear the explosions, the screaming of torn metal and the anguished cries of the injured.

"And you don't call this out of hand," asked the Doctor mildly.

"Not at all," replied the Events Librarian dismissively, "This is all very much under control. We keep this conflict localised. As few races as possible are involved. No permanent damage to the fabric of the universe is permitted."

"That's very re-assuring. But what kind of person are you that allows this carnage in the name of order?"

"Doctor, without our control, the results of this conflict would reverberate throughout the civilised galaxy. We don't cause wars. Wars cause them-

selves. We try to keep a lid on the pot while it simmers." The Librarian reached out a hand and the image of the space battle was replaced by the humming control room again. "Adventurers like yourself don't have the benefit of computer extrapolations to help you judge the consequences of your actions. At the same time, I don't mean to imply that you are solely responsible. Adventurers through the ages have made things difficult for my colleagues and myself. Now . . ." The Librarian busied himself with the viewscreen again. "... let's see if I can find you an example of the kind of thing I'm talking about. Ah yes, here we are. Tell me. Doctor, have you ever heard of a humanoid called Abslom Daak? Like you, he has devoted portions of his life to fighting the evil of the Daleks. Like you, he has seen triumph and tragedy. Like you, he could never foresee the consequences of his actions. Observe . . . and learn."

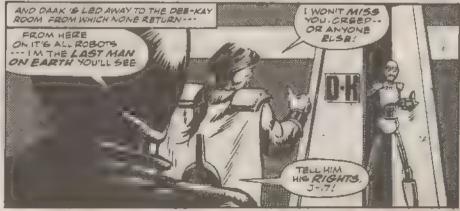
For the second time an image began to form on the screen. The Doctor remained silent and watched.





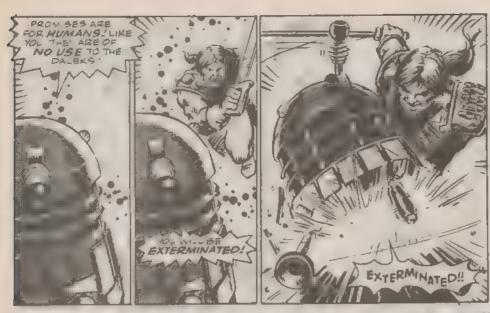


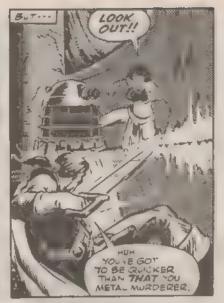
























































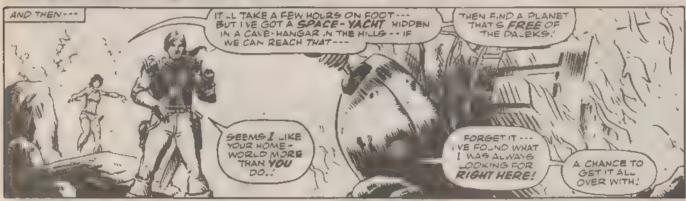


















































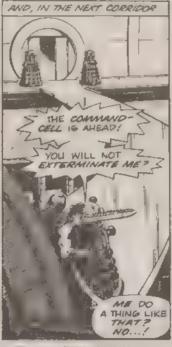






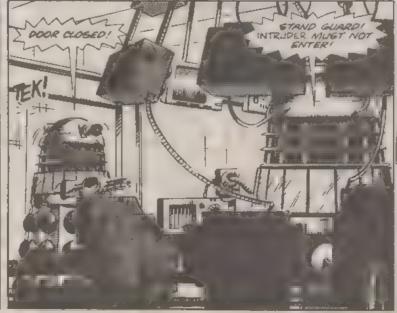








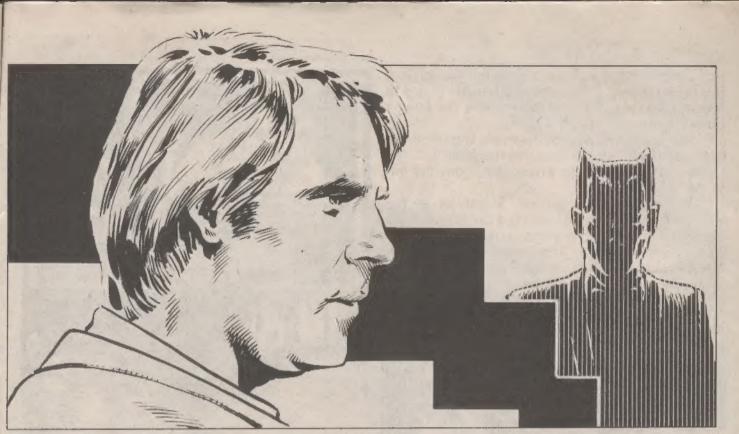












The bowed figure of Abslom Daak was replaced by the plain grey of the blank viewscreen. The Librarian turned to face the Doctor and raised an eyebrow. "You see, Doctor. Though Daak's motivations were different to your own, he too interfered in events that didn't concern him. With tragic results. It is not my intention to undermine your ideals. I merely plead for caution. The balance of the Universe is a delicate thing."

There was silence while the Doctor digested this. Then, he spoke: "It's not for me to say whether what Abslom Daak did was right or not. But he did what he thought was right. And that is the duty of every sentient creature. You do what you feel is right. I do what I feel is right... and I don't think there's anything to gain by prolonging this conversation.

"But," continued the Doctor, "I will take this up with the elders of Gallifrey. I'll go to Rassilon, if need be. People like you cannot be allowed to manipulate reality for billions of living creatures. Am I free to go?"

The Events Librarian tried on a hurt expression. It didn't fit. "Doctor, as you said yourself, you are only a traveller who has stopped for directions.

You may leave whenever you want."

The Doctor walked slowly to the TARDIS and stopped before he was inside. He glanced back at the Events Librarian, who had already forgotten about him and was busy issuing instructions to a small group of robots who had gathered about him. Then he opened the door and stepped inside.

As the last echoes of the TARDIS were drowned by the bustle of the control centre, the Librarian walked quickly across the room and seated himself in front of a small screen and began to speak into a microphone. "Events Librarian 367. Open channel 4 to control." There was a pause as the relays alligned themselves. The face of a young female humanoid appeared on the screen. She smiled and replied.

"This is control. What is your business, 367?"

"I must speak to the controller immediately."
"I think the controller is in a meeting right now.
Can I take a message?"

"This is a priority code 2 transmission. I have to

speak to the controller."

"One moment," said the girl brightly the screen went blank. When the picture returned that was a familiar face that stared out of the screen. The face of Rassilon!

"Why have you summoned me, 367?"

The Librarian coughed depreciatively. "I'm sorry, controller, I know how busy you must be, but I have something of an unusual situation on my hands. There was a Gallifreyan here. He called himself The Doctor."

"You mean there has been an unauthorised

person on your station?"

"Worse than that," replied the Librarian, "in this



very control room. He found out what we do here and seemed very upset. He said he was going to demand that you do something about the Events Library system."

"The Doctor, you say? I know of this person. He has been useful to our cause in the past."

"Do you want me to erase him from the records?"

"That will not be necessary. Merely erase the events of your encounter with the Doctor from the records. Both his memory and your memory of the meeting will disappear. The Doctor will have never been in your control room. Even the ideas expressed by one such as the Doctor can have their repercussions. He is best forgotten. That is standard procedure 367. Now, don't bother me again



unless it something important." The screen went blank, but the Librarian stared at is for several long moments before he moved. He was thinking about what the Doctor had said. There was a gnawing feeling at the back of his mind that perhaps it was possible to do something more positive than merely holding events in check.

The Librarian called up the events of his discussion with the Doctor on the viewscreen. His finger paused over the "erase" button. Then he thought of the space war raging in quadrant 42-L. He took his finger away from the button. He would have to think about some of the ideas the Doctor had put forward. In the meantime, there was a war to monitor. Time enough for philosophy between battles . . .









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